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Old-timers' night Thursday brought an early generation of radio "hams" to a meeting of the Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' club in the public library. Shown with an old spark transmitter are (from left) Eugene Ruppenthal, 3067 N. 37th st.; Fred Catel, 2497 N. Cramer st., and Louis Wollaeger, 2628 N. 66th st., who built the set 28 years ago. —Kenneth Eggert

Outlawed Transmitter of '27 Viewed by Radio Amateurs

"I never throw anything away," Louis A. Wollaeger, 2628 N. 66th st., explained Thursday night to new and old members of the Radio Amateurs' club at their reunion in the public library conference room. That was why he had an outlawed spark transmitter on hand to demonstrate to the newcomers.

Using the international Morse code, Wollaeger operated the old transmitter for several minutes.

"These caused so much interference with neighbors' radios that they were made illegal in 1927," Wollaeger recalled. He "guessed" that, although used Thursday night without an outside antenna, the spark transmitter was blurring the screens of television receivers near the library.

[An 11 minute audio mist on television screens in that area after 9:30 p.m. Thursday was attributed by engineers at WTMJ-TV, The Milwaukee Journal television station, not to the old amateur transmitter but to a cable break in the remote pickup in operation at the South Side Armory, where wrestling matches were being televised.]

The old equipment was made obsolete, Wollaeger explained, by the perfection of continuous wave telegraphy and telephony familiar to the present day "hams."

Early successes and failures in the building of their own equipment were recalled by the older members.

Many remembered the transmitter carefully designed and constructed by Fred Catel, 2497 N. Cramer st. His contemporaries agreed that it was the "most beautiful transmitter in town." It had only one imperfection. Catel never was able to get it to work.

The reunion attracted 80 persons, some who had not taken part in the club's activities since the last reunion 10 years ago.

Welfare Unit Opens Meeting

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